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LANSING



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SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan 

SUBJECT: Education Legislation Update

The Legislature was adjourned between November 10 and November 29 for its annual Thanksgiving break. During the week of November 29, I had the opportunity to brief the House Education Committee on the Michigan High School Graduation Requirements. Jeremy Hughes, Bob Morris and several of the State Board members have met individually with legislators to discuss this priority issue. These meetings have been extremely instructive to us and, I believe, have been valuable to the legislators involved. Overall, the reception by the Legislature has been very positive. Additional detail will be provided regarding this and other legislative activities related to the high school graduation proposal at the December 13 State Board meeting.

**International Baccalaureate Assistance.** HB 4835, introduced by Rep. Stakoe (R-Highland), would provide financial assistance to school districts (a maximum of two) for the International Baccalaureate application process. This bill (which is well intentioned and needs a funding source outside of the School Aid Fund) passed the House by a 58-35 vote. The bill is now in the Senate and has been referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**Lockdown Drills.** House Bill 4460, introduced by Representative Van Regenmorter (R-Jenison), reduces the number of fire drills required by each school from eight to six each year. The bill then requires schools to have two lockdown drills each year. The bill is currently on the House floor.

**Teacher Loan Forgiveness.** This is a two-bill package, HB 4129 and HB 5210, introduced by Representative Mortimer (R-Horton) and Representative Steil (R-Cascade Twp.) respectively. The legislation developed a new loan forgiveness program that would allow the Department of Treasury to forgive up to ten percent of a state loan for every year a teacher teaches in an at-risk school. In other words, if a teacher teaches at an at-risk school for ten years, that person's college loans would be forgiven.

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The bills have passed the House and are in the Senate Education Committee. The Department of Treasury opposes the legislation due to additional costs.

**Middle School Certification Clarification.** Senate Bill 443, introduced by Senator Olshove (D-Warren), would clarify some of the issues that currently occur with school administrators regarding appropriate teacher certification in middle school. The bill essentially allows a certified teacher to teach the sixth grade. Amendments will be added to clarify that a secondary teacher can only teach the sixth grade if they teach their subject area and take a program designed to update secondary teachers on sixth grade behavioral patterns. This bill is currently in the Senate Education Committee.

**Middle-School Math Initiative.** HB 5436, introduced by Rep. Moolenaar (R-Midland), continues the Middle School Math program he initiated in the current year's School Aid appropriations bill. This bill provides \$18.5 million to local school districts. The Department recently met with Representative Moolenaar to express our concerns regarding the bill. The Department of Management and Budget testified against the bill, indicating the necessary revenues may not be available.

Bob Morris and I are always available for more detailed discussion. In addition, Bob will have an update of legislative activity at the December Board meeting.